

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 06535 211704Z

ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-06 EA-07 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00

AGRE-00 AID-05 EB-08 USIA-06 COME-00 TRSE-00

SIL-01 LAB-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4127

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: FAO

SUBJ: WORK STOPPAGE BY UNION SYNDICALE IN FAO

FODAG

1. FAO DIRECTOR-GENERAL SAOUMA CONVENED A MEETING OF COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVES APRIL 21 TO REPORT TO THEM ON THE EMPLOYEE UNION DIFFICULTIES OF THE PAST DAYS, ENDING IN A WORK STOPPAGE BY SOME 200 EMPLOYEES, MOST OF THEM ITALIAN GENERAL SERVICE EMPLOYEES, ON APRIL 21, WHICH SEEMS LIKELY TO CONTINUE AT LEAST THROUGH APRIL 22.

2. THE IMMEDIATE ISSUE WAS THE TERMINATION OF THE EMPLOYMENT OF ARTURO PINI, A PRINTING SHOP EMPLOYEE STILL IN THE PROBATIONARY STAGE OF HIS CONTRACT, FOR UNPRODUCTIVITY AND INDISCIPLINE. ON APRIL 18, HE CHAINED HIMSELF TO A PRINTING MACHINE, AND UNION SYNDICALE ASSOCIATES BROKE INTO A CUPBOARD TO OBTAIN A KEY TO AN EMERGENCY DOOR AND BROUGHT IN THE PRESS TO INTERVIEW HIM. FAO IMMEDIATELY MOVED UP THE DATE OF HIS SEVERANCE FROM APRIL 20 TO 18, AND SERVED A SUSPENSION NOTICE ON HIM, TO ENABLE THEM TO EVICT HIM FROM THE PREMISES. WHILE UNGUARDED MOMENTARILY BEFORE THE POLICE ARRIVED, HE UNLOCKED HIMSELF AND TOOK REFUGE IN THE UNION SYNDICALE OFFICE, TOGETHER WITH SOME 20 UNION SYNDICALE OFFICIALS

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PAGE 02 ROME 06535 211704Z

AND SUPPORTERS. DIRECTOR-GENERAL SAOUMA WAITED IT OUT OVERNIGHT AND THEN CALLED ON THE ITALIAN POLICE TO EXPEL HIM, UNDER HEAD-QUARTERS AGREEMENT PROVISIONS. THE UNIONISTS WERE NOT COWED BY THE APPEARANCE OF THE POLICE, HOWEVER, AND AN ADVANCE GUARD OF ABOUT 20 TRIED TO BLOCK THE POLICE FROM THE DOOR OF THE UNION SYNDICALE OFFICE. WITH SOME INJURIES ON BOTH SIDES, THE POLICE BROKE THROUGH THE ADVANCE GUARD, THE DOOR, AND THE GROUP INSIDE TO SEIZE

PINI AND EXPEL HIM FROM THE PREMISES. UNION SYNDICALE HELD MEETINGS IN THE PLENARY HALL THE AFTERNOON OF THE 19 AND ALL DAY THE 20TH AND CALLED FOR A STRIKE ON THE 21ST. PINI IS SITTING ON THE SIDE-WALK OUTSIDE THE FAO PREMISES DURING THE DAY, AND IS PROFESSEDLY CONDUCTING A HUNGER STRIKE. ABOUT 200 FAO EMPLOYEES ARE INVOLVED IN THE WORK STOPPAGE, ITALIAN GENERAL SERVICE EMPLOYEES, PLUS A FEW NON-ITALIAN GENERAL SERVICE EMPLOYEES, AND A FEW PROFESSIONALS. UNION SYNDICALE CLAIMED TO HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE ITALIAN COMMERCIAL BANK AND AMERICAN EXPRESS COMPANY EMPLOYEES IN THE FAO BUILDING, BUT IN FACT ONLY THE RESTAURANT CONCESSION EMPLOYEES ARE JOINING IN THE WORK STOPPAGE. THE PROFESSIONAL STAFF ASSOCIATION BOARD DECIDED NOT TO TAKE PART. THE INITIAL DEMAN OF UNION SYNDICALE WAS FOR THE RE-INSTATEMENT OF PINI, TO WHICH SAOUMA IS ABSOLUTELY OPPOSED, BUT OTHER ISSUES ARE BEING RAISED IN THE UNION AGITATION -- E.G. "MEDIEVAL" LABOR PRACTICES, POLICE BRUTALITY, AND VIOLATION OF THE IMMUNITY OF THE UNION SYNDICALE OFFICE. AS OF NOON APRIL 21, UNION SYNDICALE WAS CALLING FOR A CONTINUATION OF THE STRIKE ON APRIL 22.

3. FORTY-THREE REPRESENTATIVES, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES, EXPRESSED THEIR FULL SUPPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S INSISTENCE UPON DEALING WITH THE PINI CASE UNDER EXISTING REGULATIONS, WHICH PROVIDE FOR APPEALS PROCEDURES, RATHER THAN NEGOTIATING IT WITH UNION SYNDICALE. GARDNER

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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